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Doubtful Intelligence

How intelligent is our Central Intelligence Agency? The question was raised, but largely evaded, when our spy plane was snared by the Russians. New doubts arising from the abortive Cuban invasion require that CIA be made to answer for its apparent shortcomings.

There is little doubt that faulty information, or decisions based on the data, played a big part in bringing about the Cuban fiasco. Reports from reliable sources indicate two errors. The CIA set far too low an estimate on the military strength of the Castro government and on its ability to keep the Cuban people in line. And the CIA considerably over-estimated the extent to which Cubans on the island would rise up against the regime in the event of an invasion.

Even allowing for the difficulties in getting facts and assessing them, these misjudgments represent serious intelligence failures. They show that personnel and procedures of the CIA should be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny.

This project is getting top priority attention from President Kennedy. In addition to probing the CIA, experts are reviewing the entire process of politico-military fact-finding and the making of decisions on those reports.

This is a sound approach to the imperative task of preventing another humiliating and dangerous mixup like the one involved in the Cuban rebel landing.